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**POETICAL  
WRITINGS**

**OF**

**LEW  
WRIGGLESWORTH**



Lewis John Wigglesworth was born at Hull, Iowa, U.S.A., June 18th, 1882. He lived in Ontario, Canada - Minnesota and Eau Claire, Wisconsin before coming to Alberta, Canada to settle at Olds, in 1903. In 1905 he was married to Inez Power of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, U.S.A. In 1911 they moved to Didsbury where he farmed until 1948 when they retired to live in Calgary and where he died April 23rd, 1956. There were two sons - William and LaVerne; three daughters - Beth, Lila and Mary. Christmas Day 1955 Mr. and Mrs. Wigglesworth celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with their children, their families and friends.

Because he loved to express himself in poetry, over the years, this book has been compiled by his wife and lovingly dedicated to his memory by her, their children and grandchildren.

62.11.30/11

## Irish Mother

She's such a human, helpful soul—  
This Irish mother of mine;  
So unpretentious on the whole,  
Yet dignified and fine,  
Her hair has turned to silver-grey;  
Her eyes, they're like no other,  
And much they tell who know her  
well—

God bless you, Irish mother!

Sure, quick of tongue, and wit she  
be;

(The blarney too, I'd say!)

She's just the greatest pal to me,  
And naught would I betray  
That doting love that holds me so—  
Far more than friend or brother,  
In Celtic pride we'll close abide—  
Just you and I, old mother.

True daughter, thou, of Gaelic lore,  
Begot of Erin's boast;  
Like shamrock-wearing sons of yore  
Drink we this fitting toast:  
"Till Death's cruel, silent hand  
shall strike,

Our mortal breaths to smother—  
Then, here's to thee, our star you'll  
be,

A guide to us — a mother!"

## Prairie Wool Poet

Of all the men beneath the skies  
There's one I most of all despise.  
When he should be out making hay  
He monkeys round the place all  
day,

A-looking wise and chewing snuff  
While thinking up some crazy stuff.  
His smock is quite beyond repair;  
There's chaff and thistle in his hair;  
His whiskers are a sight to see—  
Much like a rat's nest you'll agree.  
The buttons from his shirt are gone;  
His socks—he hasn't any on!

Give me a rope slung o'er a limb  
And soon I'd rid the world of him.  
I'd put him where such wops as he  
Would find congenial company.  
There he and "Nick" could write a  
"pome"

Entitled "Woman rules the home."  
Or, "How to make them leghorns  
lay";

Or, "Make the darned old home-  
stead pay."

Then, just by way of killing time  
Create some red-hot mushy rhyme  
And swap it for some useless pelf.  
Perhaps—well, try it once yourself!

## Isolation

From fence to fence, in billow'd  
drifts

The snow lies deep and high;  
A silent loveliness and white,  
The roadway greets the eye.

No scene more beautiful could rise  
Nor picture flawless be—

Unbroken solitude that moves

To solemn reverie.

Yet something sadly seems amiss,

And here again I sigh

For this: once more the friendly

roar

Of flivvers passing by.

Its absence now my rest destroys

As but in dreams I hear

The pulsing, rhythmic motor's  
rhyme

So restful to the ear;

That fast-approaching, mystic  
thrum—

Receding in the night—

Assurance for the lonely soul

That all goes well and right.

But now that winters' on the wane

Anon some day, at last

I'll hear once more the welcome  
roar

Of flivvers going past!

## Mutual Frigidity

"Cold, isn't it?" 'the grocer sighed  
While charging up my butter;

"Cold, isn't it?" quoth butcher  
Brown,

And turned to start his cutter.

"Cold, isn't it?" a cop averred

With something like a shiver;

"Cold, isn't it?" a neighbor yelled,  
Just passing in his flivver.

And everyone that winter's day

A-down the avenue,

The same sad fact their lips pro-  
claimed;

They all opined 'twas true.

Straight homeward then my course  
I ran,

All molars on the chatter;

Through every vein icicles clink

In tune to rough-shod clatter.

"Oh, swiftly speed the warming  
flame,

The chilling wrath to vanquish!

Bites deep the heart its frosty fang,  
That same be stilled with

anguish.

A lemon toddy hot I crave;

In furry wrap I'd fold me—

Most beastly cold it sure must be  
Since everybody's told me!"

## My Neighbors

To smooth along life's rugged way;  
To ease the pain of sordid cares,  
They lend a helpful hand each day.  
My grievances are also theirs.  
Comes loathsome illness, death or grief;

Do I of prestige suffer loss,  
From persecution beg relief  
Or weary grow 'neath any cross.  
A boon they be in dire distress,  
These souls of cheery blessedness.

Not I would deign to estimate  
A recompense in vulgar fee  
Nor yet pretend to here relate  
One-half the joy they mean to me.

To thus assert, this trivial verse,  
'Twould sadly prove inadequate—  
A volume such of deeds, rehearse,  
Wherein doth glow immaculate  
True fellowship 'twixt man and man,  
Recording angels only, can.

## Loneliness

Whence comest thou nor goest  
hence,  
Grim peace destroyer, sombre,  
dense?  
What right, God-given, thine to be  
The tortured soul's Gethsemane?  
Offspring of Satan, out-cast too;  
Disdaining heav'n's inviting blue;  
Completing all, since time begun,  
Of sorrow's havoc left undone;  
Eschew it not, dour fiend of hell—  
Too well, too well—I ken thee well!

What stealth of tread, insidious,  
thine!  
In contrast fair a shroud would  
shine  
Against thy sullen curst attire;  
Thy spirit, chill, exudes no fire.  
As, craving naught save solitude,  
Condemning man's solicitude,  
Lurk ye within, the heart to attune  
Dost reckon thee e'en far-fetched  
boon?

Away, begone! I raise the toast:  
"Here's to thy end!"—Ah, reckless  
boast!  
E'enst while joy's gen'rous bowl I  
quaff—  
Hark, something 'kin to spectral  
laugh;  
Coils round, each hope dispelling  
chain—  
Enslaved withal, aye, thine again!

## Spring Gift

While still with winter's parting  
taunts

Our senses, numb, are cluttered,  
From out the blue his lyric flaunts,  
Down in our midst he's fluttered.

His twitt'ings speak of sunny skies,  
Of birdies, trees and flowers;  
Deep warbles he of hopes that rise  
With spring's refreshing showers.

"Thrice welcome friend, again," we  
say,

"Thy faith we're now professing  
Thine optimistic view this day  
On life is all-possessing.

Unstinted joy thy song shall give,  
Whichever wind may'st blow it;  
Full sweet the life thy choice to  
live,  
Thou never-die spring poet!"

## The Last Lap

Folks hint that his memory's failin'  
His steps' slowing up too, they  
say;

His fast-dimming sight a pathetic  
blight;

That soon he'll be slippin' away.  
They finger his life's work is over—  
He's totterin', fragile an' frail—  
An' I reckon they're right, all the  
signs 'r' in sight—

He's a hittin' the Sunset Trail.

But the trail, 'twon't ever be  
lonely—

As it carries him upward and on  
He'll linger in dreams where in  
fancy it seems

Live scenes of the past and gone.  
And those cherished long since  
departed—

Comes over their beckonin' hail;  
So he can't go wrong as he toddles  
along

A-hittin' the Sunset Trail.

He won't have a fret or a worry,  
For his life has been helpful an'  
true;

The dark skies he made throw a  
pleasanter shade

In days when our comforts were  
few.

So then at the last mile's ending  
There'll be no remorseful wail—  
No, his heart's not sad, the old  
pioneers' glad

To be hittin' the Sunset Trail!

## Where You Find 'Em

Her cattle roam the sage-land wide;  
The ranch is hers, her old man  
died;  
Bequeathed her all his blood-earned  
Jack.

Then for the Unknown Range  
make track.

Tho' fair this damsel packs a gun  
And pots the rough-necks, every  
one;

Flirts too with danger just a bit;  
The outlaw bronc prefers to sit;  
Come round-up time or branding,  
then

Her skill at roping shames the  
men.

Yet, strange withal, this super-miss  
Sighs daily for a lover's kiss.  
Nor ever yet her heart's been wooed  
by cow-hand wild or lovelorn  
dude—

Still pining for a bird like you  
To keep it palpitating true.

Where does she keep? That female  
wow

Lies hid within this shack right  
now!

Don't get excited — take a look —  
You'll find her in yon story-book!

## His Bit

He seemed t've got discouraged  
An' tired batchin' too

Out on this lone bald prairie, when  
The West was young and new.

Anyway he packed his turkey and  
Hit out for parts unknown.

(Some say he took t'sailin' till  
The briney claimed its own;

Others have it he's a-sleepin' where  
The South Sea palm-trees wave;  
Or on gory Legion battle-ground  
They dug the wand'ers' grave).

"He'd a shiftless disposition,  
Naught-so-e'er of good did he  
For country or posterity—"  
Hold! friend, I disagree.

What tho' his grave be foreign  
Or his restless bones for aye  
Drift beneath unsounded fathoms,  
He'll ne'er be forgotten, nay;

For this homestead bleak, forsaken,  
Guards a monument I see,  
To that poor unloved one's  
memory—

He put it there—a tree!

## In Tribute

Dear old comrade, you have left us,  
Dear old neighbor, kind and true;  
And your going has bereft us  
Of a friend we all well knew.

From the homeland o'er the ocean.  
Years ago you journeyed here,  
And spared not your devotion  
To the calling you held dear.

Often tho' the way was trying—  
Hard at times to get along—  
Never once was heard your sighing,  
Always cheerful came your song.

Then the grim and silent reaper  
Loomed upon our vision clear;  
Deep our love, still growing deeper,  
Though we shed no pitying tear.

Well we knew your cares were  
over—  
Happy, like a child again;  
No more yours to grieve or suffer  
Earthly misery or pain.

Soon again, all fears beguiling,  
In a brighter, better land—  
Soon again we'll see you smiling,  
Once again we'll press your hand!

## Strange, Wasn't It?

I can't see what's the matter, Doc,  
I wonder could ye tell;  
Shes' ben a-actin' queer of late,  
Jest' listless-like an'—Well

Don't seem ter take no interest  
In anythin' we say  
But folds her hands and sorta stares  
All thro' the doggone day."

The doctor did not hesitate;  
"My man, I must come clear;  
Your faithful mate is threatened  
with  
Insanity I fear."

"In-san-i-t-y?" — old Perkins—  
Slowly rubbed his puzzled crock;  
"I shore do hate t'disagree  
But yore mistaken, Doc.

Nigh fifteen year without a break  
She's been right thar t'home;  
Shc's had no chance to get exposed.  
Insanity—how come?

We never have no visitors  
Ner to the neighbors go—  
How could she ketch thet darn  
disease.  
Now I'd jest like ter know!"

## The Grown-Up

O, Mary, little Mary mine,  
Why did you up and grow  
To womanhood all in a day  
And leave your daddy so?

The earth has slipt its charm,  
dearie,  
In heav'n has died a star,  
Since you, my sweet, adoring still,  
I rev'rence from afar.

I miss your sparkling dimpled  
smile;  
Sly glances, mischief sown,  
And baby arms' fond pressure too  
Thrill now in dreams alone.

Bereft of gladnesses that were,  
My heart's grown old and still  
Save for a crying emptiness  
Your nearness once could fill

But time has rolled between, love—  
Right heavily it's lain—  
Ah, that you were, dear Mary  
mine,  
A care-frec child again!

## And How!

"Lord, we'll miss him," sobbed his  
loved ones—  
After he'd been laid to rest—  
And they lingered at the grave-side,  
In their special Sunday-best.

And with tears like rills a-trickling,  
Loud their wail to heaven soars:  
"Lord, we're going to miss the old  
boy  
When comes time to do the  
chores!"

## So Be It

Not flesh-begot, blest boon to earth  
Tho' kin with flesh we dwell;  
Could'st carnal heart award thee  
birth?—  
God's will be it to tell.

Not ours to reck' the source whence  
flow  
Thy virtues, prestige-free;  
We simply feel, we only know  
A mutual trust that be:

A thralldom sweet our lives to hold—  
Thy chain, forged leagues above  
In pure immortal links of gold—  
O, friendship, thou art love!

## They Too

Out there in the world where  
nobody cares,  
When hope could seem but nil;  
'Mid fallen ideals, unanswered  
prayers,  
I can see him struggling still.  
All-pitiless too the crowds, that  
sncer  
As, busily hurrying by,  
They voice no hurrah, they never a  
cheer  
For the sad, unfortunate guy.

Their smiles are alone for the op-  
posite kind,  
To such are their laurels flung—  
The strong that've 'distanced the  
weaklings behind  
To the sound of hosannas sung.  
But not for the silent pathetic soul  
Who, weak and oppressed, alone  
Fought gamely forward but missed  
his goal—  
The fault was none of his own.

How prone we too his kin to shun  
As, harrassed by fate and tossed,  
In vain did labor the race to run,  
These men who strove but lost.

All honor then, the stalwart few  
Who 'gainst great odds prevailed;  
Nor yet belittle—they're worthy  
too—  
The lads who've tried but failed.

## The Bright Spot

No curtain eased the windows'  
glare,  
No picture adorned the wall;  
Confused disorder everywhere—  
A frontier shack as I recall.

So typical far in the West,  
Where joy and comfort seldom  
come;  
Devoid of woman's presence blest—  
A rude excuse to call a home.  
Yet there amid surroundings raw,  
The lonely place to cheer as tho',  
Lo, on the dusty ledge I saw  
A red geranium in blow!  
What mystic impulse from the past,  
Ere came the pioneering call,  
Didst propagate such mad contrast,  
I own I dared not guess at all.  
But quick in my heart there stirred  
A something, long forgotten too;  
And tho' its petals voiced no word,  
That flow'r a message spoke, I  
knew!



## Contentment

He tried the mansion on the hill,  
The castle by the sea;  
Searched next a prince's palace fair;  
Nor whit the wiser he..  
Proved false the gilded dens of sin;  
The halls where sirens sing—  
A transient pastime only, they,  
No respite do they bring.  
Throughout the earth from end to  
end  
Till soul a-nigh despond;  
Still, phantom-like, that which he  
craves  
Lies always just beyond.  
But whilst in quest of gem so rare  
He constantly did roam,  
Unnoticed, passed its dwelling-  
place—  
A humble thatch called "home"!

## Reflections

I wandered o'er the house today  
And in each mem'ry haunted  
room,  
Reminders of an epoch gay,  
Found mingled there with present  
gloom.

The ancient, crackling, papered  
wall;  
A picture high above a door;  
An oldclothes-rack, decrepit, tall;  
The sunlight slanting 'cross the  
floor.

Whilst in the attic overhead  
Some childish relics lay in view;  
A one-eyed doll; a broken sled;  
A dog-eared score of schoolbooks,  
too.

And so in meditation's pow'r  
I mused about the place awhile;  
Resolving in that granted hour  
With sordid fate to reconcile.

I pondered o'er the mysteries,  
The workings of a Hand Unseen;  
Life's disappointments, tragedies—  
The joys, alas, that might have  
been.

Thus did my life (or so it seemed)  
And this old structure fraternize;  
Around one past we lived and  
dreamed  
Shared each alike its vagaries.

Then swiftly cruel it came to me,  
Like stealthy stab from sorrow's  
dart,  
That empty tho' a house might be,  
True loneliness lives in the heart!

## Must Be

Just mem'ry now, that bygone day,  
(Alas, that it should be!)  
When toil I recked as 'kin to play  
And strife a pleasantry.

Then birds and flowers flirted gay;  
Ah, then, I know not why,  
The joy-bells clanged in gladsome  
lay—  
All heaven's blue the sky.

Somehow the skies have lost their  
blue,  
The birds refuse to sing; ;  
The flowers have donned a sombre  
hue;  
I miss the joy-bells' ring.

Gone all ambition's 'slaving  
dreams—  
Those phantom castles high—  
From that dread spectre, work, it  
seems  
I'm real inclined to shy.

No longer charged with pep and  
go,  
Content am I at last  
To let the youngsters swing the  
show,  
And watch the world go past.

My step once spright is rated slow;  
It irks me now to roam;  
And ills so foreign years, ago  
In me have made their home.

But, when those Artic play-boys  
start—  
Br-r-r, how I feel the cold!  
You don't suppose—nix, have a  
heart—  
Don't say I'm getting old!

## Better Still

Out in my grove a robin sings —  
The season's pioneer —  
In tones of soulful ecstasy,  
His song I joy to hear.

It sweetens winter's memory;  
It smacks of rippling rill,  
Of nodding daisies, azure skies —  
Ah yes, 'tis well—but still

The thing that tickles me the most  
Is not yon tuneful loafer;  
You'd never guess—I'll tell you —  
it's  
The very first spring gopher.

## One More

There's one more sound in a sacred  
nook,

And tenderly, soft white snow  
A mantle has spread  
O'er the slumbering dead  
Where in summer the roses blow;  
Where memories bring  
On Magical wing  
Sweet breaths of a long ago;  
And oft is one stirred  
The heart-spoken word  
Down, deep in the breast to know.

There's one more soul up in Para-  
dise,

And lo, in the west afar,  
The lone way to cheer  
As we journey here,  
A bright, new glittering star.  
Our course, true, to hold  
It beckoneth bold,  
This symbol of faith so given;  
Till, bidding good-bye  
To world and sky,  
We stand at the portals of hea-  
ven.

## As Others See Us

When the song has gone out of  
your heart, my boy,  
And life throws an indigo hue;  
When gall-bitter now, recollections  
return,  
A gnawing your heartstrings in  
two;

When nothing whatever to giggle  
about  
You swear on this orb you can  
find—  
Just shoot a game squint at the old  
looking-glass  
And you'll probably alter your  
mind.

What now! Is it really the facts I  
behold?  
Ho ho! What a picture it be —  
A man grown, strutting a spoiled  
baby's pout,  
And face long, sufficient for three.

O miracle wonders! You'll banish  
the groan  
And jiggle with mirth I well  
know;  
While out of that speaker patheti-  
cally grim  
Like magic a smiler will grow.

And the old looking glass, it will  
tackle your bluff,

A-swapping you grin for grin;  
Till just what the dickens you'll  
wonder occurred  
So grouchy the day to begin.

For the old looking glass is an hon-  
est good sport  
That neither will flatter nor fake,  
But straight truths deliver in  
quantities right  
To those who the lessons will  
take.

## Why, Of Course

There'll always be a Canada—  
While men are honor-born;  
With a yearn for pressing forward  
In the scowls of jealous scorn.

There'll always be a Canada—  
The name will always stand  
For a place that grows no weak-  
lings,  
And whose people love their land.

Poor dear Hitler—hear him scream-  
ing  
That old England's day is done;  
With her colonies to follow  
In the blitzkrieg of the Hun.

So let us up and show him that,  
Long after he is through,  
There still will be a Canada—  
Or does it know it too?

## Nurse! Nurse!

"There's nothing so bad but it  
might be worse"—for which some  
are thankful and some the reverse;  
tho' others will label my wit as  
perverse, that saying holds true till  
we ride with the hearse. Full many  
there be, who, when times are ad-  
verse, when sorrow comes flowing  
their joy to immerse—right quick  
are they beefing in adjectives terse  
they rag and discredit the whole  
universe.

To such would I speech: "If this  
globe you'd traverse on a satisfied  
grin and corpulent purse, with hard  
work and honest each day you'll  
rehearse; for a song and a laugh  
shed the growl and the curse. Soon  
then Lady Fortune and you will  
converse, since effort so fashioned  
will faith reimburse! Then thank  
the good Lord that, outside of this  
verse, there's nothing so bad it  
might be worse."



## The Return

While stil with winter's parting  
taunts

Our senses, numb, are cluttered,  
From out the blue his lyric  
flaunts—

Down in our midst he's fluttered.  
His twitt'rings speak of sunny skies,  
Of birdies, trees and flowers;  
Deep warbles he of hopes that rise  
With spring's refreshing showers.

"Thrice welcome friend, again," we  
say,

"Thy faith we're now professing;  
Thine optimistic view this day

On life is all-possessing.  
Unstinted joy thy song shall give,  
Whichever wind may'st blow it;  
Full sweet the life thy choice to  
live—

Thou never-die spring poet!"

## The Boys of the R.A.F.

In peerless formation against the  
grey sky,

Nor ever a swerve to the right or  
the left;

Straight off to the land of the Nazis  
they fly—

Those dare-devil lads of the  
R.A.F.

Or zooming for enemy country and  
isle,

High over Old Mediterraneans'  
blue;

Deep-laden with death-dealing mis-  
siles the while—

'Tis there, with a vengeance,  
they're "doing things," too.

Then back in the homeland un-  
ceasing they roar—

A vigilant watch on the raiders  
they keep.

Till Fascist and Nazi stay safe from  
its shore,

The R.A.F. service will never know  
sleep.

O, God do thou help in this struggle  
for right,

And comfort the stricken, the  
tragic bereft,

And keep them, and double and  
treble their might—

The gallant, brave boys of our  
good R.A.F.!

## The Abandoned Smithy

Pathetically, 'alone it stands,

A shrunken outcast, grey—  
Akin to some old broken man—

Grim relic of a different day.  
Its sagging roof and walls a-lean,

The idle swinging door—

Mute evidence of long disuse;

The mouldy, rotten floor

No longer creaks to tramp of steed,

Nor burst of flame we see

Light up the blackened, crumbling  
forge:

The smith—Oh where is he?

Why now is stilled the anvil's ring,

The bellows' purr and sigh,

That helped his livelihood to gain

In happier years gone by?

No more the shapely shoe he  
turns—

But toils with modern tools of  
death,

Inhaling ghastly naphtha fumes

In lieu of charcoal's pungent  
breath.

"Make way for progress!" Hear the  
cry

That daily to our ears it borne.

To mock the equine's gentle neigh—

The raucous blare of motor's  
horn.

"Keep forging on, O restless Man!"

Thus, civilization's sentence hard,  
While smith and smithy too pass

on,

Fond romance back into discard!

## Without

What is home without a mother?

Just like heaven without God,

Or like hell with Satan absent—

Everything goes on the prod.

What is man without a woman?

What's a ship without a sail?

Like a Scotchman without whiskey,

Or a shirt without a tail.

Could we eat without a stomach?

Could we drink without a neck?

Or when absolutely busted,

Could we then pay with a  
cheque?

But of all the knotty problems

This the worst appears to be;

How could the world exist

Without a clever nut like me?

## Or Is It Too Late?

I pondered long the other day  
On neighbor Jones, across the way.  
'Twas less than twenty years ago,  
That man the joys of life did know.  
His step was spright, he'd pep  
galore,

A bright-eyed wife and kiddies four.  
They struggled hard, Jones and his  
wife,  
To give those kids a chance in life;  
All got B.A. degrees somehow;  
But what about those hopefuls  
now?

In some cheap, dirty hash-cafe  
Both girls wash dishes by the day.  
The boys—it quite surpasses grief—  
Those husky sons are on relief;  
The whilst their ageing mom and  
sire,

(No help can they afford to hire)  
With aching bodies, strive each day  
To make the farm produce and pay.

Then like a stab it came to me:  
"What tragic similarity!"

We farmers all (God rest our  
bones!)

Are much on par with poor old  
Jones.

Our sons are gone, our daughters  
too,

We hardly know just what to do.  
While unemployment stalks the  
land

We slave, with tired brain and  
hand,

To feed the millions out of work  
And thousands who prefer to shirk."  
Lord grant the day be not far hence.  
When we'll revert to commonsense.  
And keep our youngsters on the  
farm;

Once more will country life en-  
charm,

And this lop-sided world resume  
Its long-lost equilibrium.

Thus, only thus can we attain  
To righteous happiness again.

## The Grave on the Trail

So desolate your grass-grown  
mound appears,

As weirdly from the west long  
shadows steal  
Past you and one lone pal unmoved  
by years—

The shattered relic of a wagon  
wheel.

Could you but tell whence came the  
urge for you—

The pressing origin of your  
estate—

What might the tale reveal, we fain  
would know?

Your long-dead occupant rise and  
narrate.

The trials and vicissitudes  
endured—

— Could it thus speak, our ears I  
reck' would hear

'Of hardly souls to obstacles inured,  
Whilst slow they trekked o'er  
waste and desert drear.

Did thirst or hunger haste your  
need to be?

(O heav'n forbid man e'er  
shouldst suffer so!)

Or red-men wild, cavorting savage-  
ly,

Strike here the heart of one ill-  
spared to go?

Might be the bones of one with  
toil-marked hands,

Or dimpled infant palm that  
knew but play—

Spend unit of some bold heroic  
band—

Lie rotting here in lonely secrecy?

Forsooth, we shall not know. Nor  
can we tell

What impulse blind stirred all-  
unseen the while,

And merciless through torture kin  
to hell,

Spurred on those stoic hearts long  
mile on mile.

Not ours to sigh in weak impotency;  
Or view the sordid past through  
senseless tears.

Be this our creed, to honor faith-  
fully,

The spirit of our sturdy pioneers.

Who faltered not through hardship,  
grief or pain;

Whose only recompense, assur-  
ance true,

That from their toil might others  
live and gain—

Thus fared they forth to conquer  
realms anew.

Immortal land-mark record this our  
vow,

And from thy silence grant us  
grace to feel,

That steadfast from this hour we'll  
be, as thou—

Abiding trust — thou too, old  
wagon wheel!

## Turner Valley

Off to the west, in grandeur rise  
The foot-hilled snow-caps toward  
the skies;  
Here at our feet the oil-field lies;  
In a staunch array its derricks  
too  
Like giant watchmen guarding  
true

The Valley.

Long, countless years, so we are  
told,  
Lay waiting here the liquid gold;  
Still unreleased by science bold;  
Till God's creation, man, explored  
Deep to those caverns treasure-  
stored

Beneath the Valley.

The tragedies, unanswered pray-  
ers;  
The disappointments that were  
theirs  
Who pioneered this vale of flares—  
Where now the soulful "gusher"  
flows—  
That we might benefit—who  
knows—

But this old Valley?

Be true old friend nor fail us now;  
Thy gas-fires' soft, far reaching  
glow

Assurance vital seemth so.

Yon priceless aid in war or  
peace—

Grant that its flow may never  
cease

From thee, our Valley

## Homíng Hour

Ah, here they come, I see them now!  
The boys've got the lead;  
The girls are staging quite a row  
And whipping up their steed.

Till soon their faces close I view—  
Gay Billie, laughing Jack  
To Pinto cling while Bet and Sue  
'Hurrah from Sandys' back.

O'er hill and hollow, dip and rise,  
So like in days of yore—  
The apparition greets my eyes  
Along 'bout half-past four.

Soon, too, the picture fades, it  
seems,  
Again I'm here alone;  
The lads and lassies of my  
dreams?—  
They're men and women grown.

Still, year by year, this time o'day  
I look off toward the school  
And age-old longings flit away—  
O Fancy, sweet and cruel.

Should I a hundred live to be,  
This hour each day to come—  
Across the fields you'd bring to me  
The kiddies riding home!

## The Alberta Excelsior

Depression's night had fallen fast,  
When thro' a western province pas-  
ed

A man who bore with ne'er a  
change

A banner with this slogan strange—  
"Dividends!"

His brow was bald; his eyes be-  
neath,  
Belligerent, flashed from his sheath;  
While blatant, too, discordant rung  
The accents of that well-known  
tongue,

"Dividends!"

In sordid homes he saw the plight  
Of pantries empty day and night;  
The inmates clad in jute alone;  
And from his lips escaped a groan,  
"Dividends!"

"Beware!" the wise oldtimers' said,  
"That foolish bunk hath turned thy  
head;  
Forsooth thou'll fail tho' thick thy  
hide."

Whereat that haughty voice replied,  
"Dividends!"

"Pray have a care, your ardor  
stint!"  
Thus politicians' friendly hint;  
Yet, still in boastful tones and loud,  
He cried while reaching for a cloud,  
"Dividends!"

At last with prestige turned to ice,  
Entangled in his strange device—  
Emblazoned emblem, staff and  
all—  
He trips and stumbles to his fall,  
From dividends.

What ho, such ignominious slump!  
The bottom meets him with a  
bump;  
Then, bending low, they heard him  
say,  
Ere with a sigh he swooned away.  
"No dividends!"

## Let's Try It!

You've had trouble with your neighbour;

Quite some fracas — had to quell it;

Hasten not to make it public—

Let the other fellow tell it.

Truer far will ring his version,  
(He can tell it best you know,)

Be a chivalrous old topper;

Give the other bird a show.

Comes a whispered local scandal;  
Gee it's rich, whew! can't you smell it?

Don't attempt to do it justice—  
Let the other woman tell it.

Ah! what rapture fills her being!  
Note the joy-transfigured face

As, exulting, she belittles  
That poor soul just fell from grace.

Let the other fellow tell it—  
(That dark tale you doubt is true;

Not begrudge to him the honor—  
Let him tell that story too.

With all gossips on the rampage,  
Best for you to hide away

And lock your talker in its stable—  
That's the place for it today.

## The Prairie Apple Tree

Transplanted from its infant rest,  
'Mid orchard's leafy shade sublime,

A sapling vigorous it came  
To brave a rugged western clime.

Deep-rooted, stoical it grew;  
Begot with time and eye to bless—

Reward for courage might it seem—  
This snowy, scented loveliness.

What makes, within, a longing stir—  
The footsteps yearn to linger so,

As passing near one senses deep  
A breath of old Ontario?

(Ah! does it not the strongest move,  
When memories come winging back

Forgotten joys—alas, of which  
Long trying years have known a lack!)

Symbolical of faith and trust—  
The planting of this apple tree;

The planter, too—(in reverence bow)  
All homage due, his memory!

## Utopia

'Way off in the magic, mysterious West,

Where skies meet the horizon's kiss,

Lies a country I'd ever extol as the best—

A paradise lolling in bliss.

As oft do I journey, in fancy, alone,  
When wearisome day has grown old,

To revel and bask in its happy ozone—

This region where jewels and gold

In reckless profusion lie scattered about,

Their glitter and sparkle to blend  
With dew's teary lustre that never

dies out,  
And flowers deep perfume expend.

Those hills so all-verdant; the sun never sets

Past yon purple ranges, sublime;

The firmament's glory a rapture begets

So adapt in this glorious clime.

Its zephyrs no artie joy-killer can ride—

'Tis mid-summer always it seems—

Though ne'er can it be, I'd so love to reside

In that land I explore in my dreams.

## The Good Old Days

The goodman swings his sickle low—

How clean the path he leaves!

While children nearby romp and play,

His good wife ties the sheaves.  
In homely team-work thus is passed

Each morn and afternoon;  
While lads and lasses pledge their loves

'Neath the big round harvest moon.

Ah! those were the days, the good old days—

The days of long ago;  
When farmers lived (so we are told)

Apart from debt and woe.  
Wives then were helpers too, they

say,

Who loved to bake and sew;  
Who knew the trick of wheel and loom

And fed the home fires' glow.

"Return, return those days of yore,  
Turn back the years!" we cry;  
"Bring back the joys of former scenes

Ere hearts within us die,  
Lost pride of home do reinstate,  
And potent happiness  
Past generations well did know  
Their simple lives to bless."

But progress, heedless, sets the pace,  
New modern ways to find;  
In mem'ry only, love lives on—  
Its spell is left behind  
As wantonly we hurry on;  
While the hell that we have known,  
The dreamed-of "good old days"  
will be  
When boys to men have grown.

## Retired

O'er acres broad where once in  
youthful pride  
He laid the mellow furrows row  
on row,  
A younger form than his shall  
hence preside,  
A modern generation reap and  
sow.

Great barns wherein repose the kine  
and steed;  
The farmhouse wide and home-  
stead shanty too,  
All reckon in Fate's harsh and  
treacherous creed—  
A tear rolls down; he bids them  
mute adieu.

He's done; tho' his alone by right-  
eous might  
Another's hands this domain will  
attend;  
As one condemned to live thro'  
endless night,  
With loathing deep in soul he  
waits the end.

The waiting car honks loudly from  
the lane;  
He steps within, is quickly borne  
away;  
No more the old free life to live  
again—  
Old age and city lights have won  
the day!

## Tit For Tat

Close by the sea, we loaf and rest—  
My life-long pal and I;  
The Joneses sniff, they know 'tis  
best

In mountains near the sky.

Jones dandies up and cuts a dash—  
My togs are now taboo;  
Jones buys his mate a roadster  
(Nash)—

Of course mine gets hers too.

Mine cops a head-piece—(what a  
crack!)

His too—'a classy hat;  
I rent a comfy, modern shack—  
He grabs a swanky flat.

And so it goes; the whole year  
through

We play the artful game—  
My morale he would fain subdue.  
On him I try the same.

Of late, a yearning grows apace—  
(O, rest my tired bones!)

To cut this silly, hopeless race  
I've staged with neighbor Jones.

My hills keep mounting day by  
day—

To dwell on them I dread;  
In place of being well away  
I'm sadly in the red.

'My creditors are getting sore—  
I fail to meet their loans  
Since now I blow my all and more  
To keep in step with Jones.

But still, it hands me quite some  
kick

To note with certain glee,  
That Jonesy has to buy on tick  
To keep in step with me!

## Old-fashioned

Just an old-fashioned buddy whos'  
not saying much;

Plain honest without and within;  
With an old-fashioned liking for  
honor and such

And an old-fashioned loathing for  
sin.

And old-fashioned, too, the smile  
he hands you

While trudging life's wearisome  
road.

And ever each day in the old-fash-  
ioned way

Does he lighten some weaker  
mans' load.

Alas, for this falling: he's nowhere  
the gift

For piling up riches or making a  
shift

To gather where never he sowed.

"Away with the laggard!" in blus-  
and age

And, "Down with his kind!" do  
we hear;

"Our minutes are dollars, this epoch  
and gae

Cannot harbor a sissy, 'tis clear  
No place will he find for his slow-  
thinking mind

Where speed and precision  
abound;

Then, out of the way with this fel-  
low we say,

Far better were he in the ground!"  
Says the world, "Just a moment

(and slyly he winks);

Reconsider this ease, that's the  
laddie methinks

Who keeps all my wheels going  
round!"

## The Love Nest

Round, by the willows 'neath the  
hill,

Thro' leafy, shelt'ring popular too,  
Up goes the winding lane until  
A homely cabin comes in view.

And there when toilsome day is o'er  
And sunset's rays no longer burn,

Lo, in the twilight, by the door,  
Someone awaits her mate's  
return.

Oh, blissful tryst, that meeting  
there;

Could earthly picture sweeter be,  
Or city's dazzling pomp compare  
With such sublime simplicity?

Would that those hearts might  
never know

The ghastly pall of sorrow's night;  
As hand in hand thro' life they go,  
Could all their paths be joyous  
bright.

O, blest retreat of joy untold,

Fail not your mission to perform;  
Be yours to guard the love you hold,  
Thro' summer calm and winter's  
storm.

Long may your humble walls  
resound

To blithesome, laughing gaiety;  
And heavenly, sweet content  
about

Throughout your peaceful entity!

## Unchangeable

A-nigh the sage's desert-dwell, far  
off its shim'ring rim,

A sheik drew up at ebb of day, as  
fierce its light grew dim.

And redly burned the sun's last  
heat on retinue at hand

And jewelled trappings of the  
mount that knelt at his command

Like one exuding inborn grace,  
dark-eyed, the stranger strode,

A lofty peer as ne'er did stoop,  
straight to the seer's abode.

"Why ent'rest thou this humble  
thatch?" the aged magician

spoke;

"Crav'st of thy lowly slave to make  
some heartless jest or joke?

My robes and bearing contrast thine  
akin to night with day;

Be kind good sir to leave in peace  
and go thy haughty way."

"Pray rest thy fears," the sheik  
replied, "and too, thine honor  
dear;

Far from a fool's delight to scorn  
do I thus journey here.

'Neath heavy loot my camels trod;  
my steeds outwing the wind;

My untouched hoards of gold, I  
wean, would tax a counter's  
mind.

My raiment, true out-dazzleth  
thine; mein so unrivalled, grand;

All gaily-princessed harems mine,  
the fair of ev'ry land.

Yet this thing lackest I, O' friend,  
thou soul of magic art—

All that is mine give I now thee for  
one contented heart!"

The wise-man frowned in quand'ry  
deep; then shook that snowy  
head:

"Nay, nay my son, 'tis not for man  
to so dispose," he said.

"The task be justly thine alone to  
calm thy inward self;

Nor wouldst one deign to part from  
thee thine ill-begotten pelf.

None other's will save thine must  
strive—hark ye, whilst here we  
part:

From heav'n to me no pow'r is giv'n  
to change the nomad heart!"

Forth silent went the Arab then,  
a monareh cursed to roam;

A scion rich yet pauper he—a prince  
without a home!

## Lumber Camp Reminiscences

Tier on tier within the shanty,  
Since the lads their blankets  
rolled,  
Rise the bunks so bare and lonely—  
Mutely evident of old.  
When pine was in its element,  
And virgin forest still  
Unravished by the cleft of axe  
And cross-cut's biting shrill.  
Once throughout this empty  
stillness  
Echoed loud and boisterous  
laugh;  
Shook the floors to jig and break-  
down,  
Whilst the banter, wit and chaff  
Make their round from boss to  
flunkie —  
From its corner without fail,  
Thoughts of home and dear ones  
bringing,  
Comes the fiddles' soothing wail.  
Where now those lusty rounders?  
Scattered through the earth are  
they;  
Some the grave has duly taken,  
Others passing to decay—  
Soon to be, like this old shanty,  
Minders only of the past;—  
One-time virtue unavailing—  
Ignominious, outcast.

"Dust to dust, to earth and ashes"  
Fickle Fate decrees to all,  
Be it frame of brawny stature,  
Trusty roof or sturdy wall.  
All is brevity uncertain;  
Time demands that we remove;  
Making way for newer epochs—  
Infant lives the years to prove.

## Fast Work

There dwelt a lonely bachelor  
beside the Red Deer river. The  
shades of night were falling fast,  
and out of tune his liver. When  
near his lowly shack he sat, in  
sombre reverie, as was his wont at  
close of day, beneath a jackpine  
tree.

"This single life is hell", he  
mused, "the loneliness, I fear, will  
put me in the funny-house inside of  
one short year. No kiddies prattle  
at my knee; no wife adorns my  
door. With filling up on tasteless  
grub I'm sickened to the core. My

system's sadly on the blink, I'm all  
but lost," sighed he, "and I don't  
give a hoot for anyone else, since  
nobody cares for me. O, for some  
woman kind and good my humble  
lot to share; to cook and sew some  
buttons on and drive away despair".

"Hello, big boy!" a soft voice  
spoke, so close it made him start.  
And lo, a city flapper bold out angl-  
ing for a heart. So fabbergasted  
was the guy, his feeble brain grew  
dizzy; all quickly noted by the maid  
who right at once got busy. A  
fetching glance she flung his way,  
he caught it on the chin, and took  
the count right there and then, this  
man of woe and sin.

The world by now had gone to  
roost, up rose the pale love moon.  
No better time, she rightly guessed,  
to throw a luring "spoon". Her  
"line" of cooey, flatt'ring speech,  
how smoothly off she reeled, And  
"bait"—two pursed-up scarlet lips  
—no treacherous barb revealed. She  
teased him round a time or two,  
when (sad here to relate) discretion  
lightly cast aside, he nibbled at the  
"bait". Then swallowed hook and  
"line" as well—alas, that fatal  
"spoon"—just one more sucker  
joined her string of boobies that bit  
too soon!

## Home

On Alpine summit's breezy crest;  
In Congo jungle grand;  
Where English rills induce to rest,  
I long some day to stand.  
And too, awhile, how swell to be  
Where Egypt's Nile flows tran-  
quilly  
Thro' endless desert sand.

What ecstasy, in life real,  
To sail the ocean wide;  
The trade winds' fascination feel  
On many a foreign tide!  
From strand to strand, all purpose-  
free;  
A salt sea-hand, and gallantly  
My trusty ship to ride.

Ah, yes, a boon so great I know—  
'Twould scatter gloom and fear—  
Just every place on earth to go  
And ramble far and near.  
Yet, comes the thought, where'er  
it be  
The way was wrought, quite nor-  
mally  
In dreams I'd still be here!

## Cinema Vagaries

What a classy rare hero the cow-puncher is—

In the movies  
To shoot and to ride are considered  
his biz—

In the movies.  
His pants are of leather, his shirt is  
all-silk;

He's chummy with liquor, a stranger  
to milk—

It's "red-eyc" or nothing for him  
and his ilk—

In the movies.  
This bird from his enemies never  
takes lip—

In the movies.  
So fast on the draw and he works  
from the hip—

In the movies.  
Fights many a battle, the pictures  
will tell;

Each villian he starts on a journey  
to hell;

Gets pepped himself, but of course  
He gets well—

In the movies!

But  
He doesn't wear overalls, sweater  
or smock—

In the movies!  
Nor a derelict greasy old cap on  
his crock—

In the movies.  
On a mad fighting bronc you'll not  
see him show fright;

Nor sipping soft drinks to avoid  
getting tight,

Like it's done in real life—it just  
wouldn't look right

In the movies!

And  
They don't have him forking manure  
(what a laugh)

In the movies.  
Nor trying to hand-feed a hard-boiled  
range calf—

In the movies.  
And he's never shown swearing at  
putting up hay;

Or out in the tater-patch toiling all  
day—

No, not on your life—they don't do  
it that way

In the movies!  
Here's then to the pictures, hurrah  
for them too—

So grand for the soul when the  
world's feeling blue.

Of course they're just phoney, but  
listen—that's right,

Throw on the glad-rags, we'll go see  
'em tonite!

## The Pioneer School House

Near by the grass-grown trail,  
a-dream,

A derelict in somber hue,  
(True vagabond, unloved, to seem)  
You sleep the long, long seasons  
through.

Your tattered blinds, no longer  
drawn;  
The weathered clapboards loosely  
cling;

Your chimney wracked and crumbling  
down.  
And silent too your belfry's ring.

Where now those blithesome,  
joyous hearts  
That gathered here in days of  
yore?—

A myriad thoughts that query  
starts,  
For some are here and some no  
more.

A score they marched at country's  
call,  
That through your portals went  
and came.

And some that strove did blameless  
fall  
While others rose to heights of  
fame.

And two have found a rest the  
while  
Beneath some oceans' lonely  
wave.

And one, so loved — on pagan isle  
She drew a nameless, martyr's  
grave.

Ah, strange, and yet (the thought  
grows dear)  
How many scattered o'er the  
earth,

In you, old relic, brown and drear,  
Made known their infant yearnings'  
birth.

But now you slumber here alone,  
Tho' time will end your dreams  
at last,

Like human kin whose work is  
done.  
Still lingers on amid the past.

More never may your walls resound  
To scholar's drone or gaiety  
While memories that here abound  
Endear your peaceful sanctity.



## **Find the Moral**

A wild roving lad wand'ring back  
to his home,  
With secret resolvings more never  
to roam;  
I spied thro' the window my dear  
mother fair,  
Rocking alone in her old rocking  
chair.

No fond, waiting parent I see to  
surprise  
In this up-to-date female now  
blasting my eyes;  
So hard to believe as in wonder I  
stare,  
Rocking alone in her old rocking  
chair!

Her hair's in a "curly-cut," altered  
its hue;  
She's holding a book and a cigar-  
ette, too;  
The book's not a Bible, one thing I  
would swear,  
Rocking alone in her old rocking  
chair!

There's lipstick and rouge on that  
saintly old face;  
So shiny her gown that it seems  
out of place;  
French heels on her feet and her  
shins are all bare,  
Rocking alone in her old rocking  
chair!

Oh, was I disgusted, dismayed and  
chagrined?  
I renounced all remorse for the sins  
I had sinned;  
Turned back to my rambles and  
left her, still there,  
Rocking alone in her old rocking  
chair!

## **Do You Remember**

When the West was in its youth,  
Sal,  
And the prairie stretched away,  
A virtual robe, to the foothills'  
home,  
And fellowship ruled the day;

And the worn old trail that wound  
its way  
To the door of your welcome  
home,  
Where the young folks gathered  
their songs to sing  
In the deepening twilight's gloam;

And the pioneers too—those hearts  
of gold,  
Whose ardor no hardships could  
stem;  
Whose lives a conqueror's soul re-  
vealed—  
'Tis well you remember them.

But the young folks now are old,  
Sal;  
The pioneer's day is done;  
In lieu of trail's enchanting wind  
Roll the dusty highways on.

And the song lies dead in the heart,  
Sal;  
The pitiless harrow and plow  
A garden of greed for grasping  
minds  
Have made of the prairies now.

And since for these myriad soulless  
fields  
We bartered the clean, free sod,  
To paltry ideals we've closer drawn,  
And farther away from God.

## **The Diehards**

The dogies they are down again,  
The cattle market's bad;  
Its handed us a dirty slap—  
We've lost our shirts, bedad!

Now we'll default on interest,  
On principal and tax;  
This time we got it proper where  
The chicken got the axe.

For the packers have the cattle  
And the shippers have the mun;  
And we? Oh, us poor devils—we're  
Supposed to have the fun!

Yes, the buyer hogs the profits  
when  
He bills 'em down by rail;  
And the packer swipes the carcass,  
while  
The farmer holds the tail.

And he ponders as he figures up  
His winnings, for instead,  
Always comes the same old  
answer—  
A balance—IN THE RED.

And so it goes, and year by year  
The game gets worse and worse;  
This beef-producing we deplore,  
All "critters" how we curse!

But hold; we're some unbeaten  
still—  
We'll raise a crop of grain,  
Round up them yearlin's in the fall  
AND TRY 'ER ONCE AGAIN!

## Christmas Story

In quandary deep Old Santa mused;  
(Now this was years ago)  
The midnight hour nigh at hand  
While burned the candle low.

"I've presents here for a big and small—  
For every lass and lad  
And mother too; but nought," sighed he  
"Have I for dear old dad."

"The story-book I'll give to Bess—  
She sits within all day—  
Those skates will tickle sturdy Jack;  
The razor goes to Jay.

"That sled I've tagged for little Tim,  
For Peggy there's a doll;  
While Sadie cops this ribbon blue  
And Mumsie wins the shawl.

"But father, I just plumb forgot,  
And ne'er a blessed scrap  
Of anything I see to make  
A gift for you, old chap!"  
His eye went roving round the den,  
In desperation so,  
Till, dangling on a nail, it spied  
A strip of calico.

"Hooray!" the old rogue cried in glee—  
"We're saved at last I trow;  
But burn my whiskers, for a name  
It's stumped I am right now!"

"Ho, ho! 'tis sure a funny rag—  
A gaudy, useless thing;  
Too flimsy for a neckerchief,  
Too bulky for a string!"

"It's something anyway," quoth he,  
And grinned a sheepish grin;  
Then, conscience sadly off its guard,  
He shoved the darned thing in  
His pack and hied him on his way.

So that, my dears, is why  
Each year when Christmas rolls  
around,  
The old boy draws a tie!

## Disqualified

We warned you not to try it, Bill—  
You never should have gone  
Off to that blamed stampede to ride  
That bronc "Saskatchewan."

We told you he was ornery,  
We knew this bird was tough—  
A skinkful just of nasty tricks,  
But you lacked brains enough

To view the shindig from the fence  
And leave his nibs alone—  
(Why monkey 'round your neighbor's nag  
When you can't ride your own?)

But no, you figgered we were dumb,  
Plain ignorant and dense;  
And staged one gosh-all-fired-row  
To prove we had no sense.

You'd razz that bum to hell and back  
And never once claw leather;  
Bust wide his carcass, trim his hide  
And knot his limbs together.

Of course we were some skeptical—  
We'd seen you ride before—  
But didn't say an awful lot  
For fear you might get sore.

And sure enough, he piled you—  
what!

You had no honest chance?—  
He hoisted you nigh to the stars  
Then kicked you in the pants.

Then demon-like, on your return,  
The act he did repeat  
And left you gasping front-side up—  
Calamitous defeat!

We reckon you'll reform, Bill,  
Now that you've had your "flying";  
And tuck right in and do your best  
To help like everything.

Nor evermore yon, treach'rous hunk  
Of mustang you'll bestride—  
A splurge in that swell Buick now  
Might soothe your injured pride!

## Rural Anxiety

No word you spoke at parting-time;  
Soft were your eyes of brown  
As silken-clad the path sublime  
You took and started down.

Nor turned to bid a last good-bye;  
For me you scorned a care;  
But slowly faded from my eye  
And left me standing there.

Return, my gentle one, return!  
Ere light and darkness meet;  
Beside the gate I stand and yearn  
Your presence here to greet.

Oh, Joy! at last your voice I hear,  
Nor did I wait in vain—  
Come, hustle up, you lazy dear,  
It's milking time again!

## Still Working

Silent, obscure, ere the dawn is  
awaking;  
Potent, defiant, whatever come  
may;  
Their moorings they've slipped and  
are seaward a-making—  
The swift-gliding sea-hawks are  
off on their way!

Soon, out in the blackness, they'll  
contact the cargoes;  
Swing into formation then for-  
ward they'll go;  
Scorning the customs' red tape or  
embargoes  
Theirs but to sail watchful and  
deal with the foe.

Little they reck the grave perils  
abiding,  
As vigilant ever their trust bears  
them on—  
Thro' waters where steel-coated  
sharks lurk in hiding;  
Or ocean, mine-sprinkled, their  
courses be run.

Staunch be the hearties that man  
the grey vessels—  
Humbly, unsung, do they proffer  
their aid;  
Foiling the Nazi as vainly he  
wrestles  
To break the raw curse of a  
British blockade.

Long may the Navy take pride in  
its service;  
And long may its mothers be  
proud of their boys;  
Nor ever a tempter from duty to  
swerve us,  
Or weaken our faith in our gal-  
lant convoys!

## The Old Cow Camp

Still, half-way up the coulee's bank  
The dear old bunk-house stands—  
Its bottom logs decayed and sank—  
As one with folded hands.

Sits dreaming back on other days  
When cattle roamed at will,  
Where once the choice was theirs  
to graze

And men now reap and 'till.

Its roof of sods is now no more;  
The walls so racked and low,  
Bespeak a dim-remembered lore  
Of many years ago.

Yet oft it seems those erring boys  
I knew when this was home  
Slip out from worldly strife and  
noise  
And thro' the twilight roam.

And once again we gather here,  
Again our spirits meet;  
I view their faces wistful, near  
As fancy reigns complete.

What takes me 'crost the prairie's  
swell,  
Back to the years gone by;  
With modern comforts striving well  
The heart to satisfy?

Why here, 'midst gentler ways and  
laws,  
I crave the long ago?  
Perhaps—who knows?—it's just be-  
cause  
I'm far less care-free now!

## On to Quebec!

They're off for a ride, we're a-load-  
in' 'em now  
So the choo-choo can rush them  
along  
The land of the ox-cart, the seven-  
inch plow,  
The habitant, fiddle and song.

Oh, sadly they'll long for their old  
grassy range,  
The round-up and cow-punchers'  
cuss;  
In view of such tragic and radical  
change  
There's likely to be quite a fuss.

There's old "Pinto John" with his  
shiny-blue eyes—  
Bein'! Oui, oui, M'sieu'. Mon Dieu!  
The Frenchy who coppers this bronc  
for a prize  
Blows hisself for a beautiful stew.

And Tony and Spike, they've just  
threw me a hunch  
They're a-plannin' to go a bit  
rough;  
While Roany and Pete and the rest  
of the bunch  
Like Le Diable himself, they are  
tough.

O, east is east and west is west  
And soon shall the twain of them  
meet;  
Then out of the fray will emerge  
which is best  
On his two (or maybe four) feet.

## **It's Down Again!**

Hi! neighbor, did you hear the  
news that's going round the  
town?

The market took a slump to-day  
and butter-fat is down.

There's none the motive can ex-  
plain, we're all so dumb and  
dense;

It's happened just the same, bigosh,  
and cream is off two cents!

Our merchants soon the truth will  
learn, their stocks they'll re-  
arrange,

And in the line-up on their shelves  
you'll note a drastic change.

Instead of silks and laces, now  
they'll sell 'em calico;

And cotton bloomers in the place  
of rayon panties, too.

The churches too will feel the pinch  
as sure as cats are born.

And I've a hunch that in the plate  
this coming Sabbath morn

No welcome quarters clatter, there'll  
be nickels, dimes and pence.

Oh Lordy, what a difference since  
cream slid off two cents!

There's nary one that suffers not  
when thro' this bloomin' town  
The dismal fact is spread abroad  
that "fat" is tumbling down.

And not a woman, man nor child  
but knows what's bound to  
come

When the farmer takes a wage-cut  
and the world goes on the bum.

"Quit harping for that coat, my  
dear and sure that hat will do  
Another year, remember what hard  
times we're coming to;

And Sis, forget that frock as well,  
come, come, now don't be vain!  
Go easy on the butter, Bud, 'cause  
cream is down again!"

Let other nations wrestle with their  
treasies, trades and wars;  
Afflictions, grievous too, have we,  
though strangers to old Mars

And tho' from violence we shrink,  
the feeling grows intense;

And say, DO we just yelp and cuss  
when cream slips down two  
cents!

## **If Only!**

A lucky boy old Adam was—

Just born that way I guess;

No need for him to fuss because

His wife was hard to dress.

He didn't have to read the news

Or sit a movie through;

Nor stand some fool announcer's  
views

The way we hombres do.

Sure, tranquil he could rest and  
snore

And not a worry know,

Nor put his nose outside the door  
In forty-six below.

But bliss like this could not long be;

A serpent staged his fall;

Eve swiped the fruit from off The  
Tree—

He downed it core and all.

And ever since that fateful day—

The day poor Adam fell—

It's been the farmer's lot to pay  
His debt to heav'n and hell.

The curse to them was handed  
down

To sow and reap and plow,

The whilst they mumur, fret and  
frown

Till moisture rides the brow.

Now, had I been her husband  
there,

When Eve that apple plucked,

To tempt me out of home, I swear  
Right then I should have bucked.

I'd say, "Go you and leave me  
here,

For future mankind's sake;

This place looks swell, I'll keep it,  
dear.

And you can have the snake!"

## **The Walker**

To A. B. Austin, author of "In  
Your Stride."

Ho! for the life of a walker—

Not the hitch-hiking kind we all  
know,

Who tramps a wee mile, then  
"thumbs" in his style

For someone to give a ride—  
But that vigorous, red-blooded  
human,

The weather-browned, stoical lad  
Who roars out a song as, swinging  
along,

He carries the world in his stride.  
 Not him for the easy-chair parlour  
 He scoffs at the soft-cushioned  
 car;  
 He rambles and sees in flowers and  
 trees  
 The Creators' ascendancy wide.  
 No mountain too craggy or rugged—  
 In swift broiling burn there's a  
 thrill;  
 To loiter he's sure by deep-heather-  
 ed moor,  
 This robust he-man in his stride.  
 Ho! then for the wide-open spaces;  
 To the bold, ardent strider —  
 "here's how!"—  
 Who prizes good health as a storage  
 of wealth,  
 Whose hard-muscled limbs are  
 his pride.  
 Ay, drink to his health everybody,  
 And God-speed his way with a  
 cheer—  
 This man who, alone, searches out  
 the unknown,  
 Each day in the length of his  
 stride!

## More Practical

The armchair poet racks his brain  
 to get the proper slant;  
 While boosting for the simple life;  
 Oh my! How does he rant.  
 Of frisky lambkins blithe and  
 gay  
 And milkmaids flirting on their  
 way  
 And that old gag re new-mown  
 hay  
 Quite oft you'll hear him chant.  
 With eulogizing birds and flowers  
 his pen will sometimes warm,  
 But never a word the world has  
 heard 'bout chore-time on the  
 farm.

You mushy, sentimental runt; come  
 here and take a peek  
 At what takes place on any farm  
 just fourteen times a week.  
 And then I ween, in language  
 terse  
 You'll flay your one-time style  
 of verse  
 And say "Good night" or some-  
 thing worse  
 In accents not so meek.  
 Right well I know that you'll agree  
 'twon't do a bit of harm  
 To change your tune, a song to  
 croon of chore-time on the farm.

'Tis seven p.m. The cows are in—  
 the farmer grabs a pail;  
 His husky partner follows sult. (No  
 milkmaid sweet and frail).  
 From nineteen cows the milk  
 they strip;  
 So close the air, with sweat  
 they drip;  
 Take from this boy a quiet tip—  
 It's pleasanter in jail.  
 The kiddies turn and separate - Oh,  
 life with all its charm.  
 Not half the time is set to rhyme  
 with chore-time on the farm.

"Oh Muvver! Muvver, help me  
 quick!" we hear a youngster  
 roar,  
 Whose pants have buttoned on a  
 nail and hanged him to a door.  
 Old Rover's playing skin-the-  
 cat;  
 She breaks away - Good hea-  
 en's, scat!  
 Clear out of here, you pesky  
 brat.  
 The Old Man's getting sore,  
 With malediction fouls the air; but  
 don't you take alarm -  
 That sort of play comes on each  
 day at chore-time on the farm.

Those playful lambs we read about  
 - they sure are raising Cain;  
 Right through that old board fence  
 they've gone into the field of  
 grain.  
 The calves are thirsty I can  
 tell;  
 Wee-e-e-e, oink! - the pigs are  
 mad as — well  
 They must be fed to stop their  
 yell  
 Lest we become insane.  
 The chickens! hurry, bring them in,  
 for look, here comes a storm!  
 But goodness me! things lively be  
 at chore-time on the farm.

Sing not to me of city ways; of  
 splendor, pomp and frills.  
 Give me the country every time -  
 that's where you get your thrills.  
 Society with all its bunk  
 Appeals to me like so much  
 junk;  
 But life is full of pep and spunk  
 Out here among the hills;  
 Where men are men, as sayings go;  
 and brown and strong of arm,  
 And things move fast from first to  
 last, at chore-time on the farm.

## Next Year

(A FARMER'S DREAM)

"Next year," the weather prophets say, "will be all we desire;  
And bumper crops we're sure to reap, if well the soil we till."  
'Tis twilight time, as pipe aglow,  
he settles by the fire;  
And with the smoke his spirits rise, while all around grows still.)

"Next year the sun and rain combined will furnish what we need

To make all vegetation thrive and yield profusely too

'Twill cause the grass to luscious grow, and propagate our seed  
A hundred-fold. Oh! Glad we'll be to have it all come true.

The cattle on the verdant hills a-growing fat will be;

The wheat put up a record, fit to make a fellow cheer;

And naught but optimism gay shall anyone e're see.

Methinks more bins I'll need to build at threshing time next year.

Next year, so politicians say, well all see better times,

And producee pries will advance so we can take our ease

And with our wives and families resort to warmer climes—

There to escape the wintry blasts 'neath orange-laden trees.

Oh! Sure I'll pay the mortgage off—a trifling thing to do.

I'll paint the buildings, fix the house and buy a brand new car.

That note against me at the bank, I'll lift and tear in two—

A single blot must not remain our happiness to mar.

Like heaven itself this earth will be when all this comes to pass;

And I can say goodbye to care (the time seems drawing near!)

No fear of bleak despondency—no bleak and deep morass.

Oh! Happy I can rest . . . and . . . rest—Next year . . . Next year!

The pipe slips from a nerveless grasp; a snowy pallor creeps Into the leahtern cheeks, while slowly droops the greying head.

A look, akin to lasting peace, the smiling visage keeps—  
"Next year" concerns him not at all. His rest has come — he's dead.

## Instead of Fifty-Two

Said Farmer Jack to Neighbor Joe, in terms so melancholy, "My blood is cold, I'm growing old—I'm fifty-two by golly! My smile is nil, my look is glum, my disposition's on the bum; a song I have no heart to hum—I'm everything but jolly. My pep has long deserted me; all gone is my aggression. I'm ever sad, I'm never glad—Oh, woe is my confession! I've forty aches in arms and leg, and shake like one cursed with the ague; if times get worse soon I shall beg—account of this depression. I tell you, Joe, I'm mighty blue. I wish so much, oh, how I do, that I could be a boy again, instead of fifty-two!"

"Your system's wrong," friend Joe replied, "Your view on life is phoncy. For such abuse there's no excuse — that guff is all baloney. Must anyone go mooning round, immersed in deepest gloom profound, with nose just barely off the ground, and glare of eye so stony? Reverse your program for a spell and try a bit of sinning; that mournful pan right now I'd care for one that's always grinning. Start off each morning with a laugh. Don't be afraid to joke or chaff; and eups of happiness you'll quaff each day from its beginning!"

"Forget your worries and your cares, your interest and your taxes. Don't turn the stone all day alone for other people's axes. Hang up your work and learn to play; soon you'll be singing everyday — like when the heart is young and gay, or when the mind relaxes. That old chin-whisker—scrape it off — it's to unsanitary! 'Twon't spoil your face in any case, I'll tell the world, by Jerry! Those hoary locks and fifty-odd that now have got you on the prod, won't ever put you 'neath the sod while you stay blithe and merry. Now listen, Jack, I'm telling you — take my advice and use it too—And you'll be like a boy again, instead of fifty-two!"

## The Derelict

Decrepit frame, abandoned, old;  
Recorder, mute, of history;  
Would that your past you might  
unfold,  
Its unknown truths reveal to me.

Did once, in each dear treasured  
room,  
Where now but phantom mem'ries  
hide;  
Where dust and cobwebs spread  
their gloom—  
Did love and youth walk side by  
side?

And might be then, when you were  
young,  
In wifely pride a woman sweet,  
Unstinted, glad her praises sung  
Of domicile so bright, so neat?

(And too, methinks I hear it now,  
The prating, happy childish voice  
That bids maternal fond eyes glow  
A father's doting heart rejoice.)

Did want and gay prosperity  
Come alternating through the  
years;  
Privation prove a joy to be,  
Tho' not unmixed with sorrow's  
tears?

Ah, strange indeed what thoughts  
arise;  
What fancied scenes this place  
recalls!  
Who knows what hopes, what  
tragedies  
Found birth amid these ageing  
walls.

Save this old house? Nor will it  
e'er  
Such sacredness of trust betray  
Tho' floor and gable pass repair  
And sills and rafters meet decay.

'Bide fast, old faithful, thine to  
guard  
Thy mysteries as yet untold;  
Thy secrets too for aye unshared—  
We but the pow'r to guess do  
hold.

## What a Pity!

There once was a billy (his name  
I forget)  
A funny old chap I recall;  
On account of a weakness to worry  
and fret,  
Who wouldnt be happy at all.

Each day without fail this bird  
could be found,  
Even though all conditions were  
fine,  
In quest of old Trouble—just snoot-  
ing around  
And fixing his face for a whine.

He'd worry for fear of the sun  
coming out  
To burn up the pasture and  
grain;  
Then, "What's that darned weath-  
erman thinking about!"  
The minute it started to rain.

He'd grumble, and slander the day  
he was born,  
While reaping an ill-paying crop.  
When prices were good for his  
wheat and his corn  
He'd opine they were due for a  
drop.

The air, 'twas a fact, would some  
day give out;  
We'd perish for lack of its  
breath;  
Till at last for a topic to worry  
about  
He just naturally worried to  
death.

So they put him down deep in a  
far lonely plot  
With a fifty-buck stone at his  
head,  
And its stingy inscription they  
quickly forgot—  
"He worried," was all that it said!

## C.P.R. Builders

Indomitable hearts of yesterday,  
Expanders of a system puny  
born;  
Be homage yours forever, since the  
day  
A nation from its wilderness was  
torn.

That migrant hordes might follow  
in your wake,  
The mountains wild and prairies  
bleak you dared;  
Privation too, and hardship for our  
sake,  
Nor manhood's move in danger  
ever spared.

Not yours the taunts of others then  
to heed  
As face to face with odds you  
struggled on;  
In obstacles laid low with valiant  
deed

The metal's lasting temper ever  
shone.

The task, hereulean, long at last  
complete;

In one, all Canada from coast to  
coast;

So wonderful accomplishment —  
a feat

Full many another well might  
yearn to boast.

Self-giving spartans, you who link-  
ed the rail—

Where now majestic iron mon-  
sters roll,

You drove the  you pioneered  
the trail—

Not for a corporation, but a soul!

## An Invalid's Request

Oh, take me out to the hills  
again.

Where the wolf and the coyote  
roam;

Where the mule deer guards its  
playful young,

And the woodchuck makes his  
home.

There the red-squirrel chatters  
defiance bold,

While the partridge drums his  
tune

On the moss-grown log in a  
jungled nook,

Where the sun shines through  
at noon.

Ah! pitied to be is the grasping  
grind

Whom nature never calls,

And solace for all whose ills is  
found

Within four man-made walls.

For blinded indeed are the soul-  
less eyes,

And dead the heart must be

To never have thrilled at the  
call of a bird

To his mate in the nesting-  
tree.

Then carry me back to the bon-  
nie hills,

That there I may glimpse once  
more

The glories of His handiwork  
Far off from the city's roar.

Where spruce and pine, and  
balm and birch,

All mingle to create

A scene to rival the artist's skill  
In splendor, hue and state.

## Keep Cheerful

'Tis a plenty the world knows of  
struggle and strife;

Then why should we make any  
more?

If we'd laugh at the knocks in the  
battle of life,

We'd cheer many hearts that are  
sore.

And to many crusty old codgers  
right now,

Who like to make other folks  
blue—

They grumble and growl and kick  
up a row

At all that a fellow may do.

So I'm for the lad with a grin on  
his face.

When the world isn't using him  
well;

When the grouchers declare its a  
heck of a place

And everything going to hell.

And here's to the one who whistles  
a tune

'Neath the burden he's bearing  
alone;

But the man worth while is the one  
who can smile —

'Though hog-tied, roped and  
thrown.

## The Other Side

Mother's Day is now behind us,

And we've all renewed our vow  
To protect the dear old lady

Till the end of time—and how!

Tho' we did but do her justice,

I maintain it's just too bad

That not one breath was sacrificed  
In lauding poor old Dad.

Of course the old boy's grouchy—

Disposition's just a wreck;

Might be too he's getting stooped  
(From others riding on his neck).

No longer young and handsome;

Off his pep a bit I know;

And soon there'll be just desert

Where the hair's supposed to  
grow.

Ah yes! he's sadly blemished,

But listen here my lad,

Don't ever let it stop you

From boosting for your dad.

For his heart's not built of asphalt

Or the stuff they put in bricks;



You'll find it smoothly functioning,  
And hitting on all six.

Don't forsake him, he's your daddy;  
Faithful friend and somethin'  
more

Though sorta stale and quiet,  
He's still gamey to the core.

Hurry 'round and get his slippers  
Like a duty-loving son—

The "Pioneer" and meerschaum,  
When his trying day is done.

Make him feel that you're his  
buddy  
One-hundred-odd per cent;  
'Twill plug him full of gratitude,  
The dear old-weary gent.

Then annex this gentle' minder,  
With emphases a few,  
When for Mother you petition:  
"And, please God, the Old Man  
too!"

## Remember and Forget

'Tis well that we remember;  
If so we cherish well  
The things that make for happy  
hearts

An dark forebodings quell.  
Yet vaster far life's meaning;  
The brighter view we'd get,  
Could we but daily keep in mind  
Our duty to forget.

Remember all the happiness—  
Forget the racking pain  
And bleeding heart. The parted  
thread—  
Just take it up again.  
Waste not your time with sighing,  
Nor daily round and fret;  
Most wonderful of blessings  
Is the power to forget.

The fleecy clouds and summer—  
Remember them for aye;  
December's chill is tempered  
With memories of May.  
Then banish from your horizon  
Those ominous clouds of jet,  
And brighten up with sunshine  
That talent to forget.

Remember there's a future;  
Forget the mournful past—  
The petty slights and bruises—  
Our griefs won't always last.  
Keep bravely up the pathway,  
E'en though with danger set;  
Ah! sure there's joy a-plenty  
In trying to forget!

## Some Mothers Boy

Filled with the lust of the rover—  
Sunshiny weather or rain;  
Happy-go-lucky he rambles,  
Riding the rods of the train.

No fixed destination concerns him;  
His transient companions, un-  
known;  
Some mother's boy is-a wand'rer  
Out in the hard world alone.

Boarding a "box" while in motion  
He swings just a second to late;  
Mangled his form now is lying  
Crushed by the wheels of the  
freight.

Slowly his life's blood is leaving  
Slowly the gravel turns red;  
Softly, speak softly in whispers—  
Some mother's darling is dead!

A place in the graveyard is waiting;  
Go bury him there, and a tear  
For the poor homeless hobo let  
trickle—  
And the mother who held him so  
dear!

## Quite So

Of all the men beneath the skies,  
The farmer poet I most despise.  
When he should be out making hay  
He monkeys round the place all day  
A-looking wise and chewing snuff,  
While thinking up some crazy  
stuff.

His smock is quite beyond repair,  
There's chaff and thistle in his hair;  
His whiskers are a sight to see—  
Much like a rat's nest you'll agree.  
The buttons from his shirt are  
gone;  
His socks—he hasn't any on!

Give me a rope, slungo'er a limb,  
And soon I'd rid the world of him!  
I'd put him where such wops as he  
Would find congenial company.  
There he and Nick could write a  
pome.

Entitled "Women Rules the Home",  
Or, "How to Make Them Leg-orns  
Lay"

Or, "Make the Darned Old Home-  
stead Pay."  
Or he might while away the time  
Creating red-hot mushy rhyme.  
But I must hike and raise some  
pelf—  
Y'see, I's one of 'em m'self!

## Roving Romance

In red canoe just built for two,  
With Hula by my side—  
A south seas gent on pleasure  
bent—  
I sailed Hawaii's tide.

Our bark so brave rides every  
wave,  
Each foamy crest and hollow,  
To float at ease on limpid seas  
Where trouble fears to follow.

Like far-off song from seraph  
throng,  
The zephyrs' gentle strumming;  
While softly sweet, the music beat  
In languid rapturous thrumming.

Thus, day by day, we while away  
The minutes and the hours,  
Or roam ashore like twain of yore  
Thro' verdant Eden-bowers.

Br-r-r-r, what a change! Uncanny  
—strange!

My teeth are all a-chatter!  
With sinking heart I wake and  
start—

Now what can be the matter?

No scented breeze sighs through  
the trees—

Straight from the Pole 'tis blowing.

It's broad daylight, the ground is  
white;

All night has it been snowing.

Nor swarthy lass in gown of  
grass—

The wires all are humming  
At such a rate to imitate  
The ukulele's drumming;

—Or so 'twould seem. Confounded  
dream!

I seramble out of bed.

That south sea guy will have to  
die—

I'm an Eskimo instead!

## How About This?

When the 'hoppers and the hail  
have taken toll of all your  
crop,

And the sheriff's making threats  
to throw you out upon your ear;  
When your debts are mounting  
skyward till you think they'll  
never stop,

And your heart is heavy-laden  
with despondency and fear—  
It's kinda nice right then to have

a friendly fellow call  
And try to cheer you up without  
any show of fuss,—  
Just to know he shares your  
troubles, just a word or two—  
that's all,  
With perhaps a bit of banter, or  
a sympathetic euss.

When the gossips of the neighbor-  
hood are working overtime  
Spreading tales 'bout some poor  
buddy which he's helpless to  
deny;

While they seek to drag his  
character beneath the dirt and  
slime,

And his hungry heart grows cold  
with not a friendly soul a-nigh—  
Then a guy would greet him with  
a smile

And a "put it there, old-timer!  
I know—I understand."

'Twould set his heart to singing—  
banish gloom for many a mile,  
While along would come that  
feeling—Oh, so glorious and grand!

When the grim and silent Messen-  
ger takes from the humble  
home

The rose-bud you so cherished—  
how you grieve to see her go!  
How sweet to have a neighbor in  
the lonely hours come

And say, "I'm sorry, Tom, per-  
haps there's something I could  
do."

Once more will life seem bearable,  
the gall less bitter be,

The dawn so long despaired of,  
in the East will then appear;  
A ray of hope and faith the reddened  
eyes be made to see,

As you come to know the joy of  
one true friend a-standing near.

In the country or the city, on the  
farm and in the store,  
There are lives that could be  
brightened with a word of  
hearty cheer;

And golden opportunities come  
daily to our door

To help some burdened brother  
on the upward way so drear.  
If no wealth we have to offer, that  
need never hold us back;

On the spirit of the giver much,  
as ever, will depend.

And times are without number  
when of sympathy we lack;

When the cares of life are press-  
ing and some fellow needs a  
friend.

## When Jack Left Home

I mind it well—him standin' there;  
so fine an' tall an' straight,  
And us a-biddin' him good-bye  
here by the ol' farm gate.  
He was tired of the country—fig-  
gered life out here was slow;  
He'd a hank'r'n' for the city, so  
of course I let him go.  
And though gladly I'd 'a' given half  
my life to have him stay,  
I tried my best to hide it when  
the laddie went away.  
Poor mother she was feelin' bad;  
her heart was breakin'—nigh;  
The tears were couusin' down her  
cheeks, but still she didn't cry,  
But sister sobbed while in his arms,  
and Bud he blubbered some;  
An' me—my feelin's all was dead,  
that day when Jack left home.  
We never saw our boy again; at  
first he'd write a line  
'Bout every other day or so to  
say that he was fine.  
But soon his letters seemed t' drag  
—not cheery like before;  
They come that way for 'most a  
year an' then we heard no  
more.  
An' still we kinda hoped along—  
we couldn't jus' believe  
That Jack'd leave us all for good  
an' make our hearts t'grieve.  
And every year at Christmas-time,  
before his empty chair  
We'd set an extra plate, and  
sorta see him settin' there,  
While mother breathed a fervent  
prayer her boy would cease to  
roam  
And come back lookin' like the  
day he left his boyhood home.  
Now mother's long been laid to rest;  
she never seemed the same  
Since Jackie started off that day  
t' look for wealth an' fame.  
And sister now is married—Lord,  
how the time has flown!  
And Bud has taken him a wife  
an' farmin' on his own.  
But I can still always think of Jack  
like he was just a lad.  
And figger soon he'll wander back  
t' see his poor old dad.  
So I keep lookin' down the lane —  
my head jus' turns that way—  
A-hopin' and a-thinkin' he'll re-  
turn again some day.  
An' I reckon that he'll find it so,  
whenever that may come—  
His old man waitin' at the gate  
to welcome him back home.

## Don't

When things go haywire out on  
the farm,  
Don't growl, old man, don't  
growl;  
And country life losses some of its  
charm,  
Don't spoil the day with a howl.  
Swear if you must—although 'tis  
wrong;  
Better the laugh and the cheerful  
song;  
The tide will turn—it won't seem  
long  
If you whistle instead of growl.  
If the eggs go bad 'neath the sit-  
ting hen,  
Don't storm, old lady, don't  
storm;  
Forget all about it and set her  
again—  
This time she'll keep them  
warm.  
Chicks are freakish, comical birds;  
In flocks they travel—but never in  
herds,  
And can't be hatched from angry  
words;  
So take my advice—don't storm!  
If some fine morning you lose  
your job,  
Don't whine, young man, don't  
whine;  
Fetch out the grin instead of the  
sob—  
Pretend that it suits you fine.  
Tell the Old Man he can go to—  
Then marry his daughter so pretty  
and swell,  
And start up in business against  
him as well—  
Men never were made to whine.  
When some girl "friend" has stol-  
en your beau,  
Don't cry, little sweetie, don't  
cry;  
Just say, "Aw heck!" and let him  
go—  
Don't let it moisten your eyes;  
Then step right out, with your  
head held high,  
Plug up the tears and muffle the  
sigh,  
And get you a better, handsomer  
guy—  
But please, oh! please don't cry!

## The Hermit

Lives there a hint of knowledge  
vast,  
That one should even hope to  
guess

What mystery-enshrouded past  
Gave motive for this loneliness?

Why chose he solitude's domain—  
Didst crave such mad, ironic  
bliss?

From woman's love would he re-  
frain,  
Or spurn soft infant's roguish  
kiss?

Or might be it, gay, trusting youth  
Mised, betrayed did fall;  
To learn too late the warning truth:  
"Remorse frees not its thrall!"

Unfathomable sacrifice!—  
O sordid, living hell!—  
Deep in his breast the answer lies;  
'Tis he alone could tell.

Obscure, unknown—thus day to  
day,  
With men no more to roam—  
Till silent, broken, bent and grey,  
His face he turns to Home;

Till One who notes the sparrow's  
fall  
Puts forth a hand to save;  
And secret, sweet or 'kin to gall,  
Goes with him to the grave!

## His Place

Of Tennyson and Byron, too,  
The works he did admire;  
To eminence of fame like these  
Vowed he to once aspire.

His heart to Emerson yearned  
true,  
Like any damsel fair;  
And all the flowers at his com-  
mand  
He wreathed about Voltaire.

So rev'renced he the gifted bards  
Of home and foreign soil,  
Throughout the night to put in  
verse  
Their whims and ways would  
toil.

• Till one blest hour a voice there  
came  
A-nigh his troubled bed,  
"Strive not to imitate the past  
Of vanished souls" it said.

"Be thou thyself, and give the  
world  
What resteth at thy hand;  
Nor scorn to phrase in simple  
rhyme  
What all may understand!"

Soft came the dawn whilst morn-  
ing 'woke,  
The vision on had passed,  
Yet pleased withal, the dreamer  
smiled—  
His niche he'd found at last!

## To an Old Wagon

(On the author's farm can be  
seen the remains of a wagon,  
which, although more than sixty  
years old, is still in a fair state  
of preservation.)

As one whose toiling days are past,  
Yet loathes surrender to decay;  
E'en so, dear relic—now the last  
Reminder of a by-gone day.

When venturous spirits, holding  
true—  
Brave, loyal wives and fearless  
men  
A-pioneering came—and you  
The mode of transportation then.

Full sixty years you've felt the  
strain  
Of burdens uncomplaining borne.  
Thrice twenty years! Time, sun and  
rain  
Away all trace of youth have  
worn;

Till now (sad thought) 'tis meet  
you must  
Submit to age and modern sway;  
Let fellow rot and tire rust—  
Both car and truck are here to  
stay.

No more the trails your wheels  
shall roam,  
Nor creak of axle echo near;  
For aged warrior peace and home—  
Be yours to bide life's evening  
here.

Sleep on, old timer; rest and dream;  
Thy work be done, thy rest well-  
earned.  
In thinking backward doth it seem  
Much good from thee might we  
have learned!

## Next Year

"Next year," the weather-prophets  
say, "will be all we desire;  
And bumper crops we're sure to  
reap if well the soil we till."

("Tis twilight-time as, pipe aglow,  
he settles by the fire,  
And with the smoke his spirits  
rise while all around grows  
still.)

"Next year the sun and rain com-  
bined will furnish what we  
need

To make all vegetation thrive  
and yield profusely too;  
'Twill cause the grass to luscious  
grow, and propagate our seed  
A hundred-fold. Oh! glad we'll be  
to have it all come true.

"The cattle on the verdant hills  
a-growing fat will be,  
The wheat put up a record fit to  
make a fellow cheer;  
And, naught but optimism gay  
shall anyone e'er see—  
Methinks more bins I'll need to  
build at threshing-time next  
year.

"Next year," so politicians say,  
"we'll all see better times;  
And produce prices will advance  
so we can take our ease,  
And with our wives and families  
resort to warmer climes—  
There to escape the wintry blasts  
'neath orange-laden trees.

"Oh! sure I'll pay the mortgage  
off—a trifling thing to do;  
I'll paint the buildings, fix the  
house and buy a brand new  
car.

That note against me at the bank,  
I'll lift and tear in two;  
A single blot must not remain  
our happiness to mar

"Like heaven itself this earth will  
be when all this comes to pass,  
And I can say good-bye to care;  
(the time seems drawing near!)  
No fear of bleak despondency—no  
black and deep morass.  
Oh, happy I can rest . . . and rest  
. . . Next year . . . next year!"

The pipe slips from a nerveless  
grasp; a snowy pallor creeps  
into the leathern cheeks, while  
slowly droops the greying  
head.  
A look akin to lasting peace the

smiling visage keeps;  
"Next year" concerns him not at  
all. His rest has come—he's  
dead!

## Dreams

With hope we dream of the future—  
We sigh and dream of the past;  
Of bright day-dreams are lives  
composed,

And troubled ones a few.  
And dreams there be as summer  
skies,

With ne'er a cloud o'ercast—  
But sweetest and best it seemeth  
to me

Are the dreams that never come  
true.

Then why must the heart grow  
heavy;

The spirit revert to gall?  
One still may revel in fancy  
And keep his star in view.  
Since God in His fatherly mercy  
Bequeaths to each and all,  
To comfort the troubled longing  
soul,

The dreams that never come  
true.

## Twilight Memories

When the twilight softly deepens  
And day has gone to rest,  
How memories come stealing back  
To set our hearts aglow!

Then care and trouble flit away  
As tho' with wings possess'd—  
And a quiet peace the dusk per-  
vades,

So good for us to know.

Thus we dream away the gloaming  
While the worries and the strife,  
The heartaches and anxieties

Which haunt grim daylight hours,  
Are forgotten for the moment

In the nobler thoughts of life—  
As we linger in the past,

'Mid sweet enchanted bowers

Then a passing glimpse of heaven  
And its portals' gleaming gold,  
Brings the beck and smile of angels  
From that land so pure and blest;

Whilst, within, is born a yearning  
Dear, lost loved ones hands to  
hold—

When Death's night the soul  
releases

To ascend to perfect rest.

## Our Railroads

Ere roused the West from slumber,

While the East was still at morn;  
Of fertile minds, far-seeing too,  
Their infant lives were born.

Immune to ridicule and scorn,  
Unmindful of the strife;  
Throve they apace and in their strength

A nation charged to life.

Till now long; countless gleaming miles

That serve from day to day,  
Attribute to the daring skill  
When Spartan grit held sway;

When stalwarts' roar a challenge flung

The valleys, hills and plains—  
But echoes of that strenuous past,  
The rumble of their trains.

The faith-inspiring moguls roll;  
The safe, luxurious car;  
A peerless transportation vaunt,  
And justly proud we are.

Here's to these sturdy aids of ours;

All hail, their workers too.  
With allies such, 'tis but to win—  
We'll grin and struggle through!

## The Bachelor's Lament

Oh! for the smile of a woman sweet

When the long day's work is done,

And the patter of happy children's feet

As to welcome me they run.

Oh! for the joy of a baby's arms  
Around my neck entwined;

Then the cares of the day, and the  
tempter's charms

Would vanish far behind,

Yes, give me a child and a loving wife

And ne'er would I wish to roam—

I'd dwell, forgetful of earthly strife,  
In a place called "Home, Sweet Home."

For a father's heart holds a father's love—

Its fires within do burn,  
And oft that its throbs are echoed above

Full many have yet to learn.

And many a hope it may cherish,  
And many an ache live there,  
And the fond sweet dreams that  
may perish

For the ones that are placed in  
his care.

So, give him a home where there's  
earthly bliss,

And loved ones to adore,  
And gladden his heart with a love-

warm kiss—  
Of the world he'll ask nothing  
more!

## The Cow-Mother

No sustenance north, south, nor  
west nor east;

All-pitiless the arid, withering  
sands—

Pathetic phantom of a living beast,  
Beside the dried-up water-hole  
she stands.

Protruding bones, parched throat  
and swollen tongue—

A frame-work only to a shrivelled  
hide;

Around in sinister array are strung  
The belated forms of others  
where they died.

Ironically, as though to thwart the  
law

That life be transmitted through  
the dead,

One last sweet drop her offspring  
fain would draw

While she, gaunt, hollow-eyed  
with drooping head

The end awaits. Yet does not there  
a gleam

In those dim, glazing orbs a  
hint betray

Of deathless love? Unconquered  
still 'twould seem—

A mute comparison to swift  
decay.

Brave, noble creature; none shall  
fully know

The sufferings of your kind on  
range far-flung,

From drought and heat, through  
cold, and winter's snow—

Staunch heroes, yes and martyrs  
too, unsung!

## Book Travel

In dreamy transport far from home,  
My rover-lust gone free,  
From Russia's chilling-steppes I  
roam To torrid Borneo's Sea.

On south sea isle's romantic beach  
I catch the playful surf;  
Australian shores by magic reach;  
Press Argentina's turf.

And peoples, too, of every land  
Ope wide to me their doors;  
Of lofty peer I touch the hand;  
'Mong sombre Scottish moors.

The cotters' friendly "drappie"  
share.

I greet the war-like Turk,  
Or meet with Zulu savage there  
Where threatned dangers lurk.

Blest be the man, thrice blessed he,  
Who all to future lore,  
Of works pertained to land and  
sea

Bequeaths not scanty store.

Prince noble, thou! where e'er the  
wind

Its wayward course mayst blow,  
From priceless pages of thy mind  
The world shall learn and know.

What matter tho' the grave-ward  
way

Thy mortal frame hath gone,  
Deep in the hearts of men today  
Thy trusting soul lives on!

## Mother's Pancakes

With Old Fancy in the gloamin',  
When grim day has made its  
goal,

Hand in hand I go a-roamin'  
On a peaceful twilight stroll.

Happily along we ramble  
Down the path of Worry Free;  
Leaving worldly strife an' scramble  
In the place they'd ought to be.

Till I'm peepin' in a kitchen  
Thro' the dim lamp-lighted pane,  
And I find my thoughts a-switchin'  
Back to other days again.

All to once I'm seein' plainer;  
Chair an' table come to view;  
Stove an' kettle, bucket, strainer,  
Clock and cherry mantle too.

And look, there above the fire—  
No, I'm dreamin' not at-all—

That old iron pan-cake frier  
In its place again' the wall.

Then does memory come streakin'—  
Like, somehow, I knew she  
would—

An' from out the past she's speakin'  
Of a mother kind and good.

From the batter-bowl beside her  
With her drippin' spoon I see  
She's a-feedin' of that spider  
Creamy hot-cakes-soon-to-be.

Once again I'm just a shaver,  
All excitement and a-glow;  
Watchin' with delight an' favor  
Them divine creations grow.

## Mounties Forever

Arc we to see you go, men  
(For shame, such foul abuse!)  
When motives only false are flaunt,  
Or prejudiced excuse?

Long, long ago you braved the  
test,

When all the West was raw,  
So men respected, men obeyed  
The scarlet-tunic law.

'Twas then you earned the "force"  
renown;

Thou' loath always to kill,  
Upheld the country's honor true—  
Are you not worthy still?

The redskin loved your peaceful  
mien,

The bad-man feared your vow;  
You were our friends in days gone  
by—

Must we desert you now?

Ten thousand voices answer "No,  
We'll not forsake you, men;  
A nobler justice shall betide,  
A saner judgement then

When from our midst we've  
bounced for aye

That despot, Old S.C.  
And bade our Hitler 'lively step'—  
'Bidefast R.C.M.P.!"

## Departed

Out on the prairie bare and brown  
Where the stars their vigil keep,  
His life's work o'er, he laid him  
down

And quietly fell asleep.

To that "great beyond" his spirit

flow,  
Where a place is set aside  
For tired horses—and ponies too,  
Who in loving service have died.  
Where pastures are ever fresh and  
green  
With streams of water by,  
And naught but good is ever seen  
Beneath the azure sky;

Where barns are always filled with  
hay,  
And oats tied up in bags,  
Dear Dobbin is spending the time  
at play  
With other faithful nags.

'Tis there he will rest through  
eternity;  
Yes, there he can take his fill  
Of Eternal bliss—like you and me,  
If we do the Master's will.

## The Cowboy's Hymn

Nary light was on the prairie, nary  
star lit up the sky,  
As we rode the tricky night-herd,  
my old side-kick Bill and I.  
And we sang t' keep 'em easy, tho'  
the songs they wa'n't the kind  
That you'd calc'lated tickle any pi-  
ous-thinkin' mind.  
But at last the brutes fed tranquil,  
all the herd had weary grown;  
Slow an' gentle then we circled till  
the dogies bedded down.

Gives a queer sensation, buddy, to  
be out thar' nigh alone,  
With critturs' lowing silent an' the  
coyote howlin's gone.  
Then you get t' cogitatin' on a life  
that might've been;  
An' y' wish you'd never pardnered  
with a single trait of sin.

And you tinker with yer conscience,  
and some swell resolves y'  
make  
For t' hit the trail of virtue which,  
when daylight comes, you  
break.

So I rolled a smoke fer comp'ny,  
stopped my cayuse, made a  
light;

That old cinch was loose a-workin'.  
I reached down and made 'er  
tight.

Bye'n bye—or am I dreamin'? (I'd  
been drowsin' some I know)

From across that field of cattle  
comes a tune of long ago.

Tho' the words is some'at blurry,  
with the night I reckon, still

They's the same I'd learned in  
childhood, and the singer's  
name is Bill.

And my heart starts actin' funny  
an' my throat feels sorta tight  
As I ponder on that puncher and  
his song, Lead kindly Light.

In that tenor voice o' his'n he be-  
moans th' "encirclin' gloom,"  
For the night he 'lows is darksome  
and he shore is "far from  
home."

"Keep thou my feet"—(by Jerry,  
that ol' mav'rick's locoed queer,  
Wantin' God should trail him pron-  
to, does he wander far 'r near!)

After whiles the song dies sudden  
tho' I still set dreamin' thar'  
In the saddle, whilst around me all  
the world has shed it's care.  
Then a rough hand grips my chapp-  
leg and a word is uttered low—  
Dear ol' Bill he's thar' a-waitin', so  
I rouse and with 'im go,  
For the dawn by now is stirrin'  
whilst the dew is lyin' damp;  
Soon a-patterin' come the day-shift,  
and we two ride back t' camp.

Often yet when twilight settles do  
I see as through a haze  
Those same rollin' prairie ranges  
like in them dear by-gone days.  
An' the steers I know is grazing as  
we herd 'em in the night;  
And a lonely cow-boy's singin'  
through his soul, "Lead Kindly  
Light."  
And altho' it's only fancy, with my  
thoughts far-off an' gone,  
My old heart jus' seems t' echo:  
"... kindly light ... lead thou  
me on!"

## St. Peter and Politics

When my work down here is fin-  
ished, and I climb the golden  
stair,

And meet Saint Peter at the Gate,  
he'll say, "Well, I dee-clare!"

Then he'll slap me on the shoulder  
and say, "Well, well by gum!

If here ain't old John Whittlestick!  
Where on earth did you come  
from?"

I'm mighty glad to see you, ~~then~~,  
but you can't tarry here;

The place for you is 'down below'  
—for reasons all too clear.



## Five Little Christmas Stockings

Your morals they are none too  
good; your vices they are many;  
Your virtues are so few — in fact,  
I doubt if you have any.  
And one thing more—just let me  
say, I must obey the rule  
To not let any guy in here that ever  
skinned a mule.  
Please don't commence an argu-  
ment, for this I know too well—  
In spite of all that you may say,  
you'll have to go to hell."

"Oh, let me in, dear Peter; please  
take me in," I'll say;  
For I came here from Didsbury, and  
walked the whole d—d way.  
I'm footsore, worn and hungry; take  
pity on me, Pete,  
That I may share this happy home  
where there's enough to eat.  
I know I've been a sinful cuss while  
roaming through the earth;  
Fair women were my weakness  
then; of them there was no  
dearth.  
But I have never idle been, for al-  
ways did I work  
To earn my measly grub each day,  
and never did I shirk.

"But what with crops and prices  
poor, the way was hard and  
tough—  
So if you'll pardon me, I'll say that  
I've had hell enough;  
I'm tired of working overtime, so  
take me in, I pray,  
And show me to an easy job to  
while the time away.  
Then furnish me with snowy wings,  
that I may learn to fly  
And soar just like a chicken-hawk,  
up in yon heavenly sky.  
And let me have a harp of gold, so  
I can play and sing,  
Till some day, getting low in cash,  
I hock the blessed thing.  
Now, if you'll do this much for me,  
and all these other bums,  
We'll vote you into power again  
when next election comes."

"Well said, thou faithful hayseed!  
I'll do my best," says Pete;  
"But please come in the back door  
way, and clean the barnyard  
off your feet."

The bells are ringing gaily to  
Christmas anthems sung;  
'Tis "Peace on earth, good will"  
onee more, and hearts again  
are young.  
It minds me so of other days and  
other Christmas Eves,  
When other souls were in our midst  
to share our joys and griefs,  
When here within these very walls,  
now sombre, grim and still,  
Glad, happy childish voices the  
joyous hours would fill.  
For I'm living in the past tonight,  
and I see by the fire's dull glow  
The place where five little stock-  
ings hang sweetly in a row.

Our Billy boy was a lively son,  
while Jack was a quiet lad,  
But they both hung their stockings  
there to be filled by Mother  
and Dad;  
And Betty and Dotty left theirs too,  
hoping for trinket and doll.  
And last came tiny wee Mary's  
sock; the eutest of them all.  
So when the kiddies were safe in  
bed, dreaming of Old Saint  
Nick,  
And the treasures that would soon  
be theirs, all through a magic  
trick,  
We'd ~~steal~~ so softly through the  
gloom and fill with loving care  
The five little Christmas stockings  
hanging beneath the stair.

Gone are the days that used to be;  
the little birds have flown;  
They've left the home-nest one by  
one till I am all but alone.  
And I cry out in my loneliness —  
Oh, why should life thus be,  
Why do our loved one's leave us?  
Lord, help us the reason to see.  
For my heart is filled with an ach-  
ing void, and I see by the fires'  
soft glow  
A picture of five Christmas stock-  
ings a-hanging in a row.